

Application Serial No: 10/644,549
In reply to Office Action of 06 April 2006

Attorney Docket No. 84454

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 2 and 4-14 are currently pending in the application. Claim 10 is allowed. Claims 1, 2, 4-9 and 11-14 are rejected. Claim 12 is amended by this response.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4-9 and 11-14 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Blyler, Jr. et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,166,993) in view of Blyler, Jr. et al (U.S. Patent No. 4,913,508) and further in view of Maas et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,224,189).

These rejections and objections are respectfully traversed in view of these amendments and remarks. With regard to the Examiner's rejection of claim 1, Applicants argue that the prior art does not teach a cured optical grade epoxy resin body, wherein said body is provided with a cone-shaped end and a generally planar base end. Maas et al. teaches a connector body (20) with two cone-shaped ends and no planar end. The planar end is necessary to Applicants' invention because it is used to encapsulate multiple fiber optic strands as illustrated in FIG. 9 and FIG. 11. Applicants argue that the connector body (20) as taught by Mass et al. could only serve as the physical coupler of two separate fiber optic elements. Whereas in Applicants' application the optical grade epoxy resin body couples more than two fiber optic element. To establish prima facie obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or

Application Serial No: 10/644,549
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Attorney Docket No. 84454

suggested by the prior art. *In re Royka*, 490 F.2d 981, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA 1974).

Applicants respectfully suggest that, in light of the above argument, claim 1 should now be allowed. Applicants also suggest that claims 2-9 are now also allowable through dependency upon claim 1.

With regard to the Examiner's rejection of claim 9 Applicants argue that the prior art does not teach a coupler wherein said plurality of fiber optic strands is arranged in a ring-like pattern about a central axis of the cone-shaped end of said body. The plurality of fiber optic strands as illustrated in FIG. 2 item 201 in Blyler, Jr. et al. is arranged in a bunch or bundle. The fibers do not form a ring, which by definition is a circular form or arrangement with a vacant circular center. In Blyler, Jr. et al. 201 there is no vacant circular center. The center contains fiber optic strands. Whereas in Applicants' invention as illustrated in FIG. 9 and FIG. 11, the fiber optic strands are arranged in a ring-like pattern with a vacant circular center. To establish prima facie obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. *In re Royka*, 490 F.2d 981, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA 1974).

Applicants respectfully suggest that, in light of the above argument, claim 9 should now be allowed.

With regard to Examiner's rejection of claim 11, Applicants

Application Serial No: 10/644,549
In reply to Office Action of 06 April 2006

Attorney Docket No. 84454

argue that the prior art does not teach a cured optical grade epoxy resin body, wherein said body is provided with a cone-shaped end and a generally planar base end. Maas et al. teaches a connector body (20) with two cone-shaped ends and no planar end. The planar end is necessary to Applicants' invention because it is used to encapsulate multiple fiber optic strands as illustrated in FIG. 9 and FIG. 11. Applicants argue that the connector body (20) with two pointed ends as taught by Mass et al. could only serve as the physical coupler of two separate fiber optic elements. Whereas in Applicants' application the optical grade epoxy resin body couples more than two fiber optic element. Applicants also argue that the prior art does not teach a coupler wherein said plurality of fiber optic strands is arranged in a ring-like pattern about a central axis of the cone-shaped end of said body. The plurality of fiber optic strands as illustrated in FIG. 2 item 201 in Blyler, Jr. et al. is arranged in a bunch or bundle. The fibers do not form a ring, which by definition is a circular form or arrangement with a vacant circular center. In Blyler, Jr. et al. 201 there is no vacant circular center. The center contains fiber optic strands. Whereas in Applicants' invention as illustrated in FIG. 9 and FIG. 11, the fiber optic strands are arranged in a ring-like pattern with a vacant circular center. To establish prima facie obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art.

Application Serial No: 10/644,549
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In re Royka, 490 F.2d 981, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA 1974).

Applicants respectfully suggest that, in light of the above argument, claim 11 should now be allowed. Applicants also suggest that claims 12-14 are now also allowable through dependency upon claim 1.

With regard to Examiner's rejection of claim 12, Applicants argue that the prior art does not teach a coupler wherein the free end of each of said at least one fiber optic strand of said first fiber optic element and the free end of each of said at least another fiber optic strand of said second fiber optic element are butt-end terminated. There is no reference to butt-end terminated fiber optic elements in the prior art cited by the Examiner. It is not apparent from Blyler, Jr. et al ('993) FIG. 2.

With regard to Examiner's rejection of claims 8 and 13 it is not at all clear from Blyler, Jr. et al ('993) FIG. 2 or the abstract whether the positions to which the free ends of the first and second elements extend are spaced apart by a distance allowing a sufficient extent of diffusion of light in the optical grad epoxy resin (12) there between to couple light between each strand of one of the first and second fiber optic elements with each strand of the other of the elements. A visual inspection of the figure does not expressly state the limitation of claims 8 and 13 and therefore does not teach this limitation.

Applicants have amended claim 12 to correct an error in

Application Serial No: 10/644,549
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Attorney Docket No. 84454

dependency of the claim so that now claim 12 depends upon claim 11 and not upon claim 13.

Applicants respectfully suggest in view of these remarks and amendments that all grounds for rejection and objection have been removed by the foregoing amendments. Applicants state that no new matter has been added by this amendment, and that all of the remaining claims in the application are now believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance of this application are therefore earnestly solicited.

The Examiner is invited to telephone Jean-Paul A. Nasser, Attorney for Applicants, at 401-832-4736 if, in the opinion of the Examiner, such a telephone call would serve to expedite the prosecution of the subject patent application.

Respectfully submitted,

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